

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/630,121

Applicant(s)

CHEN

Examiner

William P. Watkins III

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1772

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment filed 26 July 2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 7,10-12,15,16,18-21,31-33,38-40 and 42-60.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☒ Other See Continuation Sheet.

Continuation of Attachment(s) 9. Other: drawings filed 8/1/2000 are approved.

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1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 26 July 2006 has been entered.

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the line 5, of page 1 of the specification, after the phrase "1999" the phrase --, now U.S. 6,617,009,-- has been inserted.

This amendment updates the status of the parent application and is a formal matter that does not change the scope of the presented claims.

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3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The examiner notes that restriction requirements were issued in both the instant application 09/630,121 and the parent application 09/460,928 between at least Group I, drawn to a plank with a core with a print layer laminated onto the top of the core (described at page 4, line 25 to page 5, line 3 of the instant specification), and Group III, drawn to a plank with a print design printed directly on the core or plank (described at page 5, lines 9-15 of the instant specification). Claims to Group I were elected in the grandparent application 09/460,928 and presented in the 10/909,684 grandchild application. Claims to Group III were elected in the instant application 09/630,121.

The limitation of the core having a surface tension of at least 34 dynes /cm in independent claims 31, 47, 51 and 53 in combination with the other limitations of the independent claims define over the cited art. The examiner notes that the PVC cores of Nishibori '138 and Nelson cannot be taken as inherently having a surface tension of 34 dynes/cm or higher. Newly cited Hopper et al. (U.S. 5,777,014) at column 5, lines 14-16 teaches that selection of particular plasticizers for PVC may result in surface tensions of 30 to 34 dynes/cm. Thus the PVC resins of

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the cited references cannot be said to inherently have 34 dynes/cm or above absent specific teachings.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William P. Watkins III whose telephone number is 571-272-1503. The examiner works an increased flex time schedule, but can normally be reached Monday through Friday, 11:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M. Eastern Time. The examiner returns all calls within one business day unless an extended absence is noted on his voice mail greeting.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on 571-272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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WW/ww

September 30, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William P. Watkins III". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "W" and a distinct "III" at the end.

**WILLIAM P. WATKINS III
PRIMARY EXAMINER**